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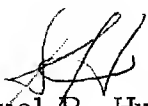
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

April 7, 1977

**\*NSC Review Completed\***

TO:  IC  
Task Force Chairman  
PRM-10

Attached for your information  
is a copy of the Interim Report  
submitted to the Central Committee  
on April 1.

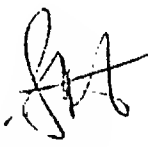
  
Samuel P. Huntington

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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April 1, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
FROM: SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON   
SUBJECT: PRM/NSC-10 Comprehensive Net Assessment  
Interim Report

1. Attached is the Interim Report of the PRM/NSC-10 Comprehensive Net Assessment, which is submitted to you in your capacity as Chairman of the Special Coordinating Committee. (Tab I).

2. In accordance with the procedures which you previously authorized, this report has not been formally cleared with the interested agencies. An earlier version was, however, informally discussed at a meeting of the Net Assessment Working Group on March 29 and benefitted from the comments and criticisms of the members of the group.

cc: David Aaron

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PRM/NSC-10

COMPREHENSIVE NET ASSESSMENT

INTERIM REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

PRM/NSC-10 directs that a "comprehensive examination be made of overall U.S. national strategy and capabilities." The net assessment conducted by the Special Coordinating Committee is specifically asked to "evaluate the objectives and national strategies that may be pursued by our principal potential adversaries and examine the alternative national objectives and strategies appropriate to the United States." In keeping with this mandate, the main body of this Interim Report is designed:

(1) to outline the context of this net assessment and strategic review;

(2) to elaborate some of the general issues with which the net assessment is concerned; and

(3) to present some considerations involved in formulating national strategy.

Attached to the main body of the report are:

(1) a brief summary of the work completed to date (Tab A);

(2) an outline of the organization of the net assessment (Tab B);

(3) the text of PRM/NSC-10 (Tab C);

(4) the text of the Terms of Reference for PRM/NSC-10 (Tab D).

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## II. THE CONTEXT OF THIS REVIEW

Every eight years the advent of a new Administration provides the United States with the opportunity to reconsider its national strategy and goals in relation to those of its potential opponents. The events of the past eight years -- in the United States, with our opponents, and in the world at large -- lend a peculiar urgency to the reconsideration this year.

This reconsideration is the latest in a series of efforts to formulate comprehensive national strategies which include:

- NSC 68, prepared in 1950, in the wake of the Soviet nuclear explosion and the Communist conquest of China, which recommended a major U.S. political economic, and military effort to combat communist expansion, including a tripling of military expenditures;

- NSC 162/2, in 1953, in which the Eisenhower Administration outlined the New Look with its stress on nuclear weapons (strategic and tactical), massive retaliation, and cut-backs in conventional forces to insure U.S. ability to maintain an adequate defense for "the long haul;"

- the Kennedy Administration reassessment of strategy in 1961-62, which led to a rapid build-up of the ICBM force and a substantial expansion of U.S. general purpose forces, reflected in the concepts of "flexible response" and "mutual assured destruction;"

- NSSM 3, in the first year of the Nixon Administration, which, while not challenging the basic approach of the Kennedy and Johnson Administration, shifted the planning assumption from a "2 1/2 war" to a "1 1/2 war" strategy;

- NSSM 246, in which the Ford Administration, in its last months, provided useful analysis but no fundamentally new conclusions with respect to strategy.

The strategic reviews of the last two Administrations focused almost entirely on military strategy and force posture. Yet the world has changed greatly since the early 1960s and the strategic assumptions and concepts of that decade are not necessarily relevant for this one. The times now require a broader reconsideration of national strategy, comparable to that undertaken in NSC 68, involving political, economic, technological, and diplomatic factors as well as military ones, and a new effort to define our overall national goals in relation to our potential opponents.

This reformulation of US strategy thus proceeds in the context of many constraining parameters that were largely absent during the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s:

(1) The relationship with our potential adversaries is now not simply competitive but also in part cooperative.

(2) The concerns of U.S. foreign policy are now more diverse and complex, involving not simply issues of security vis-a-vis the "Soviet threat," but also questions of North-South relations, finance, trade and investment, nuclear proliferation and arms sales, global resources, and human rights.

(3) The relative capabilities of the U.S. compared to those of other states -- allies and neutrals, as well as adversaries -- have declined significantly from the days of overwhelming U.S. predominance in the 1940s and 1950s.

(4) The domestic claims on public resources are far greater, absolutely and proportionately, than they were before the mid-1960s.

Now, as in the past, the central threat to U.S. national security comes from the Soviet Union. Aspects of that threat, however, have changed. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Soviet Union was seen as the center of a hemispheric bloc reaching from the Elbe to the Mekong and also as the center of a global network of communist parties dependent upon Moscow for direction and support. Since this early postwar period, significant changes have occurred in the distribution of power and in the alignments of power. The Sino-Soviet split has seriously weakened the Soviet alliance system. In part as a result of this, Soviet leadership of the worldwide communist movement is no longer unchallenged. For the United States, China remains in one sense a potential opponent, but in another sense parallel interests have made it almost a de facto ally. China's low capabilities, however, limit its role in either respect. The broader diffusion of power is reflected in the ability of other countries or groups of countries to act independently on the world scene. In most cases, such as in the Group of 77, these blocs may raise significant questions of economic policy, but thus far they have lacked the coherence and the resources directly to challenge American security interests. The growing western dependence on imported oil, particularly from the Middle East, has, however, increased the vulnerability of the U.S. and its principal allies to potential adversaries, such as OPEC, which on one occasion demonstrated that they did have the coherence and the resources to impose

significant costs on the U. S. and its allies. In addition, recurring secondary threats, such as terrorism, have arisen. Nonetheless, the central but not exclusive focus for this reconsideration of strategy, as for its predecessors, must be U.S. relations with the Soviet Union.

Significant changes have taken place in those relations in the past decade. On the one hand, a relaxation in the tension which characterized that relationship in the 1950s and 1960s has made it possible to discuss and, in some cases, reach understandings with the Soviet Union on matters of mutual concern, among which the SALT agreements are clearly of central importance. On the other hand, the past eight years have also seen the steady growth of Soviet military power. Since the mid-1960s the USSR has moved from a position of marked inferiority in nuclear capabilities to one of rough equivalence with the United States. Depending on the outcome of SALT negotiations and American decisions on strategy and procurement, the Soviets have the potential to increase and improve their nuclear forces to the point where they could exceed the quantity, quality, and net destructive power of American forces. Whether or not such a measure of superiority could be exploited usefully in war or in diplomatic confrontation is debatable; equally uncertain -- and more significant -- is whether the Soviets, our allies, other nations, and ourselves will believe that it could be so exploited. In recent years, the Soviet Union has also strengthened, modernized, and enhanced the readiness of its forces in Eastern Europe. At the same time, it dramatically increased its deployments in the Far East and, in effect, prepared for its own "2-war" contingency. The Soviet navy has matured from a weak coastal defense force into a modern global maritime power, increasingly capable of threatening U.S. and allied sealines, challenging U.S. naval forces in the Mediterranean, and gradually achieving the capability to project military power abroad.

These changes in the Soviet-American military relationship come at a time of major new uncertainties in international political alignments. Significant changes could occur in the European balance, given the potential impact of Eurocommunism, of political unrest in Portugal, Spain or post-Tito Yugoslavia, and of the difficulties in forming effective governing majorities in democratic states. Africa faces the challenge of several new self-styled Marxist-Leninist regimes, the threat of racial conflict in Southern Africa, and the appearance of secessionist, revolutionary, and interventionist forces. Regional conflicts continue in much of Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and trends toward political fragmentation exist throughout the world. These instabilities could provide new opportunities for influence for a stronger Soviet Union. Yet the Soviet leadership also faces major domestic constraints -- persistent

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economic problems, nationality discontent, and shifting demographic trends, which should limit both their ability to exploit their increased strength, and their inclination to become directly involved in new, costly foreign adventures.

### III. MAJOR ISSUES IN THE NET ASSESSMENT

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the overall net assessment will be broken down into a number of regional and topical net assessments. Cutting across these efforts, however, are a number of general issues which the overall assessment, as well as the regional and topical assessments, must consider. Five of these issues are identified here.

1. The Balance of Influence. As indicated above, the strength and the reach of Soviet power have increased significantly. To what extent does this increase in the resources of power lead to expanded political influence? The net assessment will consider:

(1) Trends in the expansion and contraction in Soviet and American influence abroad and the costs and benefits of these changes to both the USSR and the U.S.

(2) Regional priorities and targets. What is the relation between U.S. commitment or neglect and the Soviet propensity to enter a region? In which regions is the USSR likely to make the greatest gains and to suffer the greatest losses?

(3) The probable extent, timing, and strength of Soviet expansion. Is the threat greatest in the long or short term? Is there likely to be a period of "maximum danger" or a period of "maximum opportunity" in the next five to ten years?

(4) Factors that could cause the contraction of Soviet influence. Will Soviet presence provoke a backlash in the areas that they penetrate? What impact would alternative U.S. responses have?

(5) Ways in which Soviet military power determines or facilitates their involvement and influence abroad.

(6) Competing Soviet interests such as the stake in detente or non-military economic goals. How might these constrain Soviet expansive tendencies?

2. National Psychology and Frames of Reference. Soviet leaders do not necessarily perceive international conflict, negotiation, and accommodation in the same way as Western leaders. Both Marxist-Leninist ideology and the historic Russian legacy influence the thinking of Soviet policy makers. These influences contrast markedly with traditional liberal democratic ways of looking at the world. They have implications which affect, among other things, the prospects of success in negotiations. Relevant issues include:

(1) Soviet doctrine for nuclear and conventional war. How far do their categories of analysis and measures of significance correspond with those of the U.S. and its allies?

(2) Soviet perception of the strategic balance, Western posture and intentions, and judgments of the trends. How can we influence these? In what respects are their concepts determined by the conflict with China?

(3) Soviet views of the role of force in current and future circumstances, their understanding of the concepts of "parity" and "superiority," and the value they place on them. How do their concepts compare with those of American leaders?

(4) Soviet views on the distinction between "internal affairs" and international relations.

(5) The adequacy of our evidence on Soviet attitudes. How well do we know what they think, and what are the consequences of uncertainty?

(6) Conditions under which the use of force, or the threat to use force -- at nuclear, conventional, and diplomatic levels -- will become more or less appealing to the USSR's leadership.

3. Potential Threats. The growth in Soviet power poses increased military threats to the U.S. and its allies in the event of war, could raise problems for the stability of deterrence, and provides a firmer basis on which the USSR could attempt to exert political leverage in a diplomatic crisis. In addition, there are economic threats, such as might stem from dependence on imported oil. Among the most salient threats are:

(1) Strategic attack. The central threat depends on the present strategic balance, actual and perceived changes in the balance, and prospects for change in Soviet and American nuclear doctrine. What is the significance, both to the U.S. and USSR, of asymmetries in force structure? What responses would the USSR probably make to alternative U.S. postures?



(2) Political uses of strategic forces in diplomatic confrontations. In what ways and in what types of crises might the Soviets attempt to exact leverage from nuclear capabilities or threats?

(3) Military and political uses of conventional forces, in the context of strategic parity, in regions where the USSR or the PRC can deploy substantial conventional power either directly or through proxies.

(4) Covert operations. What is their scale and effectiveness? Where are the Soviets likely to be most active?

(5) Economic threats. To what extent will the U.S. and its allies be vulnerable to acts of "economic warfare," such as resource embargoes, boycotts, debt leverage?

4. Regional Goals and Global Competition. The U.S. has a global interest in the balance of power with the Soviet Union. It also has other interests specific to countries and regions, such as political stability, economic development, and amicable diplomatic relations. In different regions these two sets of interests may either be complementary, contradictory, or unrelated. To assess the interaction of these aims on general strategies and specific policies, the regional net assessments consider:

(1) Which local goals are caused by global competition with the USSR; which need to be modified by global strategic considerations; which are irrelevant to US-Soviet competition?

(2) In which regions and in what dimensions -- political, military, economic, and diplomatic -- is it more and less important to counter Soviet influence?

(3) The impact of specific U.S. policies such as those on human rights, arms transfers, and nuclear proliferation on the Soviet-American interaction at the regional level.

(4) Costs and benefits with respect to the global balance of alternative American options for involvement in regional conflicts. For example, what are the costs and benefits of U.S. alignment with one side (blacks in Southern Africa); diplomatic involvement with both sides (Middle East); military supply to neither side (South Asia), one side (Zaire v. Angola), or both sides (Greece-Turkey and Middle East)?

5. Consequences of Increasing Interaction. As the cooperative element in US-USSR relations has become more significant in recent years, it is particularly important to assess the extent to which increased economic interaction may be desirable, and the ways in which it would affect the competitive aspects of American-Soviet relations. Trade, credits, and technology transfer are salient issues. Topical net assessments address the following questions, among others:

(1) Overall costs and benefits, short and long term, of increased interaction. Will more transactions reduce conflict and aggressiveness, or sell the Soviets the rope with which to hang us, or have no effect at all? How would greater interdependence affect the Soviet system? Should the U.S. government encourage, subsidize, ignore, or discourage certain types of interchange?

(2) Types of exchanges most and least advantageous to the U.S. Which transactions have highly uncertain outcomes; how predictable are the results of increased trade? Which areas of exchange should, in these terms, be expanded or contracted?

(3) Criteria for evaluating changes of policy, especially in regard to issues such as computer technology, food sales, and production licensing and investment in the USSR or Eastern Europe.

(4) Mechanisms for control. How effective are current ones such as COCOM? Are additional mechanisms needed?

(5) How should the U.S. government deal with the private sector in regard to issues such as general or selective export policies and banking and credit policy controls?

6. Transformation of alliances. Major changes appear to be underway in the East-West alliance systems. Issues of relevance for the future are:

(1) What are the trends in the transformation of Soviet and American alliances and the costs and benefits of these for relative Soviet and American power?

(2) What impact do these changes have on Soviet and American war-fighting capabilities, especially a conflict limited to Central Europe?

(3) Which Soviet strategies might lead to the accelerated loosening of Western alliances? What would be the risks/benefits of a parallel American effort in Eastern Europe?

(4) Which factors, domestic or international, might lead to a tightening of alliances in the West as well as the East?

(5) How would broadened alliance membership or changes in the central alliance institutions affect the central US-Soviet relationship?

(6) To what extent will conflicting economic interests and nationalist demands within both alliances affect their cohesiveness for security purposes?

#### IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL STRATEGY

The fundamental purposes of the United States are spelled out in the Declaration of the Independence and in the Preamble to the Constitution. A basic national strategy delineates the ways of realizing those purposes in the face of foreign threats and hostility. It would be premature at this point to present specific strategies before the task force analyses that should underpin them have been completed. Any realistic national strategy, however, must consider how to mix the following elements of policy:

1. Cooperation and Competition. A national strategy must set forth the extent to which the United States will attempt to achieve its objectives through cooperative arrangements (for example, arms control, increased trade) with its potential adversaries, and to what extent it will adopt a competitive posture (weapons buildup, trade restrictions).

2. Power and Values. National security requires maintenance of a balance of power, but national purpose requires the promotion of American values. A national strategy must provide an effective combination of both these considerations.

3. Military, Economic, and Political Instruments. A national strategy should provide for varying emphases on these three instruments.

4. Structure and Flexibility. A national strategy requires a general framework to provide structure and coherence, but it should also allow policy to evolve in phases and permit flexible adaptation to new contingencies.

5. Self-Reliance and Cooperation with Allies. Certain goals require strong unilateral commitments and capabilities, and others require multi-lateral undertakings and collective efforts with our allies. A national strategy must encompass both of these needs.

PRM/NSC-10

## COMPREHENSIVE NET ASSESSMENT

### SUMMARY OF WORK TO DATE

1. The Presidential Review Memorandum itself was prepared, circulated among the interested agencies, revised, and approved by the President on February 18th. Terms of Reference was drafted, circulated, revised, and approved by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs on March 10.

2. A Net Assessment Group was created composed of senior officials from the interested agencies. This group met on March 11th and discussed the major cross-cutting substantive issues which will be considered in the context of the net assessment.

3. A Net Assessment Working Group was created, which at its three meetings on March 15, 22 and 29, considered the overall organization and procedures of the assessment, task force terms of reference, and the draft interim report.

4. Eleven regional and topical task forces have been organized as follows:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| (1) Europe             | (7) Strategic nuclear policy and forces                         |
| (2) Middle East        | (8) Technology  |
| (3) South Asia         | (9) Economic strategy and capabilities                          |
| (4) Africa             | (10) Intelligence (including covert action)                     |
| (5) East Asia          | (11) Political institutions, leadership and national psychology |
| (6) Western Hemisphere |   |

Chairmen and associate chairmen have been appointed, and the membership constituted of individuals nominated by the interested agencies. All the task forces have formulated terms of reference to guide them in the preparation of their reports due May 15th. In almost all cases, work has started on the drafting of the papers which will be included in these reports.

5. A four-person central staff at the NSC has been created to direct and coordinate the activities of the net assessment and to draft the overall report. Thirteen other members of the NSC staff are participating in the assessment in one capacity or another.

6. Extensive discussions and consultations have been held with officials in State, Defense, the intelligence community, and elsewhere on the substantive issues and methodologies to be employed in the net assessment. The DOD Office of Net Assessment has been particularly helpful in this connection.

7. Efforts have been made to maintain close liaison with the Military Force Posture portion of the PRM/NSC-10 review. Several people are involved in both aspects of the review, and persons connected with the net assessment have taken advantage of the opportunity to sit in on meetings of Force Posture groups.

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